

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Amend claims: 1-8

1. (Currently Amended) A process ~~Process~~ for the production of a pipeline-transportable crude oil from a bitumen feed, the process comprising:
- (1) dividing the bitumen feed into two fractions, the first fraction comprising between 20 and 80 wt% of the feed, the second fraction comprising between 80 and 20 wt% of the total feed, ~~[[()]]~~the two fraction together forming 100 wt % of the feed~~[[()]]~~;
 - (2) ~~distillation~~ distilling of the first fraction obtained in step (1) ~~(preferably under vacuum)~~ into a light fraction boiling below 380 °C ~~(preferably the 450–°C fraction, more preferably the 510–°C fraction)~~ and a residual fraction~~[[()]]~~;
 - (3) thermal cracking (of at least part of, ~~preferably all of,~~) the residual fraction obtained in the distillation process described in step (2) ~~[[()]]~~;
 - (4) ~~distillation~~ distilling of the product obtained in step (3) into one or more light fraction(s) ~~[[()]]~~boiling below 350 °C~~[[()]]~~, optionally one or more intermediate fractions ~~[[()]]~~boiling between 350 and 510 °C~~[[()]]~~ and a heavy fraction ~~[[()]]~~boiling above at least 350 °C~~[[()]]~~;
 - (5) combining the second fraction obtained in step (1), the light fraction obtained in step (2) and the light fraction(s) obtained in step (4) to obtain a pipeline-transportable crude oil~~[[()]]~~; and,
 - (6) using the heavy fraction obtained in step (4) for the generation of power and/or heat.

2. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 1, in which the bitumen feed in step (1) is divided into two fractions, the first fraction comprising between 40 and 60 wt% of the feed and the second fraction comprising between 60 and 40 wt% of the total feed, ~~(the two fraction together forming 100 wt % of the feed).~~

3. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 1 or 2, in which the thermally cracked product is split by distillation into a light fraction (boiling below 350 °C), an intermediate fraction ~~[[()]]~~boiling between 350 and 510 °C~~[[()]]~~ and a heavy fraction ~~[[()]]~~(boiling above 510 °C)~~[[()]]~~.

4. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 3, in which ~~[[()]]~~ at least part of ~~[[, preferably all]]~~ the intermediate fraction is also added to the pipeline-transportable crude oil of step (5).
5. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 4, in which the intermediate fraction is thermally cracked, followed by distillation in a light product and a heavy product, the light product being added to the pipeline-transportable crude oil mentioned in step (5), and the heavy fraction ~~preferably used in the generation of power and/or heat as described in step (6).~~
6. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 5,~~ in which the thermal cracking in step (3) is carried out at a temperature between 440 and 510 °C and a pressure between 5 and 50 bara.
7. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 5,~~ in which the thermal cracking in step (3) is carried out in a soaker vessel.
8. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 7, in which the thermal cracking is carried out at a temperature between 420 and 500 °C and a pressure between 2 and 20 bara.